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LAWRENCE SULC

Traveling
Kremlin
salesmen

In the Soviet Union, sports and athletes are dedicated to enhancement of the party and state. That's not surprising, certainly, but now, it seems, "traveling salesmen" have joined the athletes.

When Soviet sports teams are fielded abroad, the athletes composing them are members of professional sports organizations, the Dinamo Sporting Club and the Central Army Sports Club (ZSKA). The former belongs to the KGB, the Soviet foreign intelligence and internal security organization, and the latter to the GRU, Soviet armed forces intelligence.

Sport jaunts abroad provide cover and training for Soviet special forces (*spetsnaz*) teams and their KGB counterparts, whereby they gain area-familiarization and the opportunity to case their targets. In the event of war, these elite fighting units are dedicated to operations in enemy territory — behind the lines, in a manner of speaking — where they would engage in guerrilla strikes, sabotage, terrorism, and assassination. The *spetsnaz* are supposed to take out the military targets. The KGB goes after the political and economic ones. These objectives, of course, include human targets — VIPs and others of special interest.

Where do the "traveling salesmen" come in? Stockholm newspapers not long ago revealed the preoccupation of Swedish security officials with the series of suspicious visits to the homes of more than 100 Swedish pilots by, of all people, "traveling salesmen." These "agents of the East" or "illegals," as the Swedish officials referred to

them, clearly wanted to locate and learn about key elements of Swedish defense (fighter pilots) to be able to "liquidate" them in the event of an invasion.

In the same vein, the Swedish navy is concerned about its submarine crews, who have also been checked out by suspicious strangers and probably "marked" for elimination.

Carmen Villar Mir, of ABC, the respected Spanish publication, called it "a systematic and massive infiltration of Sweden by Soviet agents." She quoted a Swedish paper to the effect that the security service had cautioned Swedish fighter pilots to make themselves "anonymous." Apparently, the GRU *spetsnaz* and the KGB are targeting not only VIPs, which is to be expected, but mid-level key personnel as well — in the military, in the government, "and even in industry" the Swedes say.

The British, for their part, Drew Middleton writes in *The Army Times*, recently completed exercises against a mock *spetsnaz* attack. The British believe NATO nuclear forces personnel would be the ultimate Soviet objective. In an impending crisis, analysts speculate, *spetsnaz* soldiers would position themselves abroad for operational deployment by replacing embassy and trade personnel. "Tourists and cultural and trade delegations" would also provide cover, Mr. Middleton writes.

Agents in place would have to supply logistical support for the larger units that would follow once hostilities began. "The GRU," says Mr. Middleton, "would take advantage of the KGB's global network of agents...." Perhaps so, but the GRU has its own agents abroad for this purpose, while the KGB has its own requirements for its own agents. No matter. Identifying the service — GRU or KGB — is distinctly secondary.

Identifying the problem and taking precautions is much more important. And as low-intensity warfare and Soviet active measures assume greater importance in the protracted conflict between East and West, Soviet *spetsnaz* forces are something Western planners must do something about.

The Swedes and our British partners in NATO, apparently, are taking the threat seriously.

Lawrence B. Sulc is president of The Nathan Hale Institute, a Washington-based organization devoted to non-partisan research on domestic and foreign intelligence. He was an intelligence operations officer for the Central Intelligence Agency for more than 23 years.